

Red Spider Mite

The **red spider mite** (*tetranychus urticae*) is distantly related to small spiders, which they resemble. They are a common garden pest and their presence is indicated by a very fine light speckling or as localized pale yellow spots on the upper surfaces of leaves as they suck sap to feed.



They pose no disease risk, and will not bite humans / pets.

You may see them on walls, or get red marks from where you have squashed them when you have sat down on garden walls, or brushed past them.

They can be a severe problem in greenhouses where temperatures, humidity levels, and the absence of their natural predators can cause large populations to develop.

They are common in our gardens and highly viable on surfaces such as walls, where crevices provide protection, and the sun provides optimal temperatures.

Red spider mite are not a public health pest, and will not cause damage to buildings.

Life Cycle

Adult female mites are about 0.5mm long and the males are slightly smaller. The mites are usually yellow or green with darker green markings, although hibernating females turn bright red when they stop feeding in autumn.

The female mites live for a month or more and lay up to 100 eggs each, on the underside of leaves. These eggs hatch after 3-30 days depending on the temperature, and the six-legged larvae pass through two nymphal stages before developing into adults – at 26.5 degrees centigrade, this will take only 8 days.

Breeding is continuous throughout the spring, summer and early autumn when the females stop laying eggs and seek places to hibernate.

Control Measures

Red spider mites breed in hot and dry places. If you can increase the humidity around the plant you decrease the pest's reproduction rate. In greenhouses and patio areas the floors can be damped down.

In the garden, and on the walls of our homes, other natural predators usually keep red spider mite numbers in check. Whilst they may pose a problem at some time of the year, our seasonal weather changes generally manage numbers.

A number of controls are available from garden centres and specialist garden supplies companies to control red spider mite as a glasshouse pest. These include biological controls, where a predator can be purchased to feed on the mites, and sprays which can be used to protect plants.

The use of insecticide sprays outside is NOT recommended. These products adversely effect other beneficial insects, and can potentially damage our natural environment.

Services from Us.

Whilst we understand that spider mite may be a nuisance, they do not carry disease, and are generally considered only a garden pest. **We do NOT provide a treatment service for red spider mite.**

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